

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:

a personal computer comprising a web browser that provides communication between the personal computer and the Internet; and

5 a peripheral device coupled to the personal computer, that comprises a device driver 25, and firmware that contains a uniform resource locator (URL) that identifies and is used to direct the web browser to a location on the Internet where appropriate driver software is located and available for downloading and installation on the personal computer;

10 and wherein, when the peripheral device is connected to the personal computer, the URL launches a browser on the personal computer which is directed to the Internet location containing the driver software, automatically downloads the driver software to the personal computer, and automatically launches and installs the downloaded driver software on the personal computer without user interaction.

2. The system recited in Claim 1 wherein the peripheral device comprises a printer.

3. The system recited in Claim 1 wherein the peripheral device comprises a scanner.

4. The system recited in Claim 1 wherein the peripheral device comprises a camera.

5. The system recited in Claim 1 wherein the peripheral device comprises a plotter.

6. The system recited in Claim 1 wherein the peripheral device is coupled to the personal computer by way of a local area network.

7. A method for use with a system comprising a peripheral device and a personal computer having a browser that provides communication, the method comprising the steps of;
 - configuring the peripheral device to have firmware comprising a uniform resource locator (URL) to an Internet location where appropriate device drivers for the peripheral device are made available for downloading;
 - using the URL and the web browser to automatically connect the personal computer to the Internet location holding the device drivers;
 - automatically connecting the personal computer to the Internet location holding the device drivers using the URL and the web browser;
 - communicating information regarding the personal computer and its operating system to the Internet location using the web browser;
 - downloading a driver installation package containing a device driver for the peripheral device from the Internet site to the personal computer using the web browser that is appropriate to the personal computer and its operating system and that is capable of implementing a driver installation process without the user specifying any option selections; and
 - automatically initiating the driver installation process upon receipt of the driver installation package to install the device driver for the peripheral device on the personal computer.
8. The method recited in Claim 7 further comprising the step of:
 - notifying the user when the driver installation process on the personal computer is complete.
9. The method recited in Claim 8 wherein the notifying step uses low-level commands.
10. The method recited in Claim 7 wherein the step of accessing the URL comprises the step of using low-level commands.
11. The method recited in Claim 7 wherein the step of accessing the URL comprises the step of providing high level access via an embedded web server in the peripheral device capable of serving its own web pages.

12. The method recited in Claim 7 wherein the peripheral device comprises a printer.
13. The method recited in Claim 7 wherein the peripheral device comprises a scanner.
14. The method recited in Claim 7 wherein the peripheral device comprises a camera.
15. The method recited in Claim 7 wherein the peripheral device comprises a plotter.